



Washington State Office of Civil Legal Aid

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To: Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee
Washington State Access to Justice Board

From: James A. Bamberger, Director

Re: First Quarterly Report (July 1, 2005 – September 30, 2005)

Date: October 5, 2005

Pursuant to RCW 2.53.020(3)(c), I hereby present the first report to the Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee and the Access to Justice Board outlining the activities of the Office of Civil Legal Aid for the period July 1, 2005 to September 30, 2005. This report makes reference to a number of documents and materials, which are included as attachments to this report. The objective of this report is to provide the Oversight Committee and the ATJ Board with an understanding of the activities of the Director and the context within which those activities have been or, in the case of ongoing activities, are being carried out.

Before moving to the substance of the report, I want to extend my thanks to the team at the Administrative Office of the Courts which began to put in motion many of the fiscal and administrative details necessary to bring a new state agency on line well before a Director was appointed. This team worked to address all aspects of agency need from identifying and setting up office space, establishing an independent agency identity within the state governmental structure, establishing budgetary, internal accounting and related internal fiscal systems, addressing personnel, payroll and benefits matters, identifying and purchasing essential equipment, hardware, software, etc. I would like to personally thank AOC Administrator, Janet McLane, AOC Management Services Director, Ramsey Radwan, and their core set-up team which included Jeff Boyce, Kathy Sallee, Diane Pieroni, Michelle Young, John Lynch and Jan Nutting. Many others were also (and continue to be) helpful and I do not mean to discount their contributions by omission.

I. Organization of the Office of Civil Legal Aid

The origins of the Office of Civil Legal Aid lie in the report and recommendations of the Washington Supreme Court's Task Force on Civil Equal Justice Funding. Established by the Supreme Court in November 2001 (Order Establishing Task Force on Civil Equal Justice

Funding -- Attachment 1), the Task Force was chaired by Justice Charles W. Johnson. Court of Appeals Presiding Judge Mary Kay Becker served as the Co-Chair. The Task Force was assigned four major responsibilities:

- Conduct a comprehensive study of the unmet civil legal needs of poor and vulnerable people in Washington State
- Quantify the cost of addressing the unmet civil legal needs that would be identified in the civil legal needs study
- Develop a rationale for and recommendations designed to secure long term stable state funding necessary to address the needs identified in the study
- Make recommendations designed to ensure effective, non-partisan administration and oversight of state funded civil legal aid services

The Task Force completed the Civil Legal Needs Study in September 2003 (Civil Legal Needs Study – Attachment 2 (spiral bound in pocket)). Working from the Civil Legal Needs Study, the Task Force quantified the level of funding needed to address the needs and made recommendations regarding the sources of such funding. (Quantification Analysis – Attachment 3). Finally the Task Force recommended that the objectives of bipartisan and effective administration and oversight of state-funded civil legal aid services would be served by: (a) moving civil legal aid funding into the judicial branch budget; (b) establishing an independent judicial branch agency to administer state appropriated legal aid funding; (c) maintaining legislative involvement in oversight of state funded civil legal aid funding; and (d) recodifying the statute governing civil legal aid funding into a new chapter in Title 2 RCW. (Final Report of the Task Force on Civil Equal Justice Funding – Attachment 4).

The recommendations of the Task Force were accepted by the Supreme Court and transmitted to the Board for Judicial Administration. They were included in the package of integrated judicial branch recommendations that came to be known as the Justice in Jeopardy initiative.¹ Through the coordinated efforts of the Court Funding Task Force's Implementation Strategies Committee, the Access to Justice Board's Equal Justice Coalition, the Washington State Bar Association, the Office of Public Defense and many others, these recommendations were translated into a number of budget initiatives and substantive pieces of legislation that were presented to the Washington State Legislature this past session.

Among the substantive bills was HB 1747, a bipartisan effort sponsored by a number of House members, including Oversight Committee members Rep. Rodne and Rep. Lantz. A similar bipartisan bill, SB 5685 was sponsored by a number of Senators including Oversight Committee members Sen. Johnson and Sen. Kline. (Rep. Lantz and Senators Johnson and Kline served on the Supreme Court's Task Force on Civil Equal Justice Funding.) HB 1747 passed the Legislature unanimously in the House and by a wide bipartisan margin in the Senate. Governor Gregoire signed the legislation into law on April 21, 2005. The bill has been since codified in a new section of the judicial branch title of the Revised Code of Washington, RCW 2.53. (RCW 2.53 – Attachment 5).

¹ The full report of the BJA's Court Funding Task Force, which includes the findings from the Supreme Court's Task Force on Civil Equal Justice Funding can be found at:
http://www.courts.wa.gov/programs_orgs/pos_bja/wgFinal/wgFinal.pdf

RCW 2.53.010 established a Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee. RCW 2.53.020 established the Office of Civil Legal Aid. RCW 2.53.030 outlines the rules and regulations that govern the use of state legal aid funding. RCW 2.53.005 sets out the legislative findings and rationale for the transfer of civil legal aid functions from the executive to the judicial branch. It reads:

Findings. The legislature finds that the provision of civil legal aid services to indigent persons is an important component of the state's responsibility to provide for the proper and effective administration of civil and criminal justice. The legislature further finds that state-funded legal aid services should be administered by an independent office of civil legal aid located within the judicial branch and subject to formal continuing oversight that includes bipartisan legislative representation.

Pursuant to the requirements of RCW 2.53.020(2), the Supreme Court's Access to Justice Board engaged in a broad search process, received applications, interviewed candidates and forwarded three names to the Supreme Court. On June 7, 2005 the Court entered an order appointing me as the Director of the Office of Civil Legal Aid effective July 1, 2005. (Relevant materials relating to the Director appointment process are included in attachments 6).

Under the statute, it is the responsibility of the Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee to establish a salary for the Director of the Office of Civil Legal Aid. Because the Oversight Committee had not yet been appointed, AOC Administrator Janet McLane recommended that an interim salary be established at the level used to build the fiscal note submitted to the Legislature during the deliberations on HB 1747. The Chief Justice accepted this recommendation, and approved the recommended interim salary. (Memo from Janet McLane to Chief Justice Alexander – Attachment 7).

The Office of Civil Legal Aid commenced operations on July 1st. The following narrative outlines the activities of the Office of Civil Legal Aid in the following areas: (1) Establishing the Office of Civil Legal Aid; (2) Contract Execution, Oversight and Administration; (3) Activities Related to the Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee; (4) Judicial Branch Agency Relations; (5) Access to Justice Board Related Activities and Relations; and (6) Other Relevant Activities.

I. Establishing the Office of Civil Legal Aid

The OCLA is physically located in the main AOC office building on the east side of Olympia. The office is fully technologically functional (Technology Portfolio – Attachment 8), with computer, fax, telephone, cell, copy/scanning and other essential functions having been acquired or made available by AOC on a fee-for-service basis. A budget has been established for OCLA itself (OCLA Budget FY06-07 – Attachment 9) and a system for regular monthly tracking of expenses by line item. The OCLA Director personally reviews and approves all invoices, making sure that all expenses charged to the Office of Civil Legal Aid are properly authorized. The vast majority of the budget is dedicated to known and measurable regular expenses such as salary, benefits, contracted phone, technology, mail and related expenses. AOC is providing space, fiscal and some limited administrative support for OCLA operations at no expense. In the

coming weeks, OCLA and AOC will enter into a Level of Service Agreement outlining the specifics of the relation between OCLA and AOC, identifying with some level of precision the range of services provided by AOC at no cost and the other services provided on a fee-for-service basis. The OCLA Director meets every six weeks with the AOC Administrator.

From the outset, the Office of Civil Legal Aid has received requests for legal assistance from persons seeking legal help. A system has been established for tracking requests, responses and referrals.

The Office of Financial Management imposes a number of requirements on executive branch agencies. A number of these make sound sense (e.g., open records, technology inventory, disaster system protection) and have been incorporated them into OCLA practices. Consistent with the approach employed by the Administrative Office of the Courts, care is taken to protect judicial branch independence and prerogatives.

II. Contract Execution, Oversight and Administration

The OCLA's principal statutory responsibility is to contract and oversee the proper expenditure of funds appropriated for civil legal aid services pursuant to RCW 2.53.030. In addition, the Legislature has charged the OCLA with administering funds appropriated for an alternative dispute resolution system to handle legal disputes between agricultural employers and employees. Activities relating to each of these responsibilities will be discussed separately.

A. Civil Legal Aid Funding -- Northwest Justice Project

RCW 2.53.030(b)(3) directs that the Office of Civil Legal Aid contract with a "qualified legal aid provider" for the provision of civil legal aid services to eligible clients. The statute defines "qualified legal aid provider" as "a not-for-profit corporation incorporated and operating exclusively in Washington which has received basic field funding for the provision of civil legal aid to indigents from the federal legal services corporation or that has received funding for civil legal aid for indigents under this section before July 1, 1997." There are two non-profit legal aid providers that meet this definition – Northwest Justice Project (which receives funding from the federal Legal Services Corporation) and Columbia Legal Services (which received state funding from 1992 through 2004). Columbia Legal Services notified the OCLA that, consistent with the Access to Justice Board's State Plan and its mission, it did not wish to contract for state-appropriated funding. That left the current provider – Northwest Justice Project – as the only provider available to contract with the OCLA. Consequently, there was no need to engage in a competitive bidding process, and a sole source contract was executed with Northwest Justice Project.

On August 12, 2005, the Office of Civil Legal Aid entered into an interim contract with Northwest Justice Project (NJP) for the provision of state funded legal aid services. (NJP Contract – Attachment 10). The purpose of the interim contract is to ensure continuity of the funding stream necessary to enable NJP to continue providing civil legal aid during this transitional period and pending the negotiation of a permanent biennial contract. The interim contract contemplates that NJP will continue to play a number of roles essential to the effective and efficient delivery of civil legal aid activities authorized under RCW 2.5.3030 in a manner

consistent with the Access to Justice Board's State Plan for the Delivery of Civil Legal Aid Services (which is currently undergoing revision). Under the contract, NJP is principally charged to:

- Provide day-to-day legal aid services through its 9 regionally located field offices (Spokane, Wenatchee, Yakima, Vancouver, Olympia, Tacoma, Seattle, Everett, Bellingham) and 2 satellite offices (Bremerton, Okanogan).
- Contract with private attorneys to provide civil legal aid services to eligible clients in areas of the state where clients cannot effectively access a field office (e.g., Southeast Washington, the Olympic Peninsula).
- Operate the statewide toll-free intake, education, advice and referral line known as CLEAR
- Host, support, maintain and update the client self-help information and resources website – www.washingtonlawhelp.org
- Provide statewide advocacy coordination and support for civil legal aid programs providing state funded legal aid services to eligible clients
- Serve as a fiscal agent for subcontracting state-appropriated funds to support the operations of seven specialized legal aid and twenty-five local volunteer attorney programs

The Office of Civil Legal Aid is in the process of negotiating a permanent contract with NJP. This contract will substantially restate the work plan in ways that will allow better tracking of the outcomes realized within each of NJP's key areas of operational responsibility and the client benefits realized as a result of the modest increase in state legal aid funding obtained in the FY 2006-07 budget (\$1.5 million per year, \$3.0 million for the biennium).

As noted above, NJP serves a fiscal agency role under the state contract. Through this role, a portion of the state funds that it receives under the contract are used to support the activities of seven (7) specialized legal aid providers and twenty-five (25) local volunteer attorney programs that provide civil legal aid services to eligible clients in the subject matter areas authorized under RCW 2.53.030. For efficiency purposes these funds are subcontracted to the Legal Foundation of Washington. (NJP-Legal Foundation of Washington subcontract – Attachment 11). Under the terms of the subcontract the Legal Foundation of Washington is required to flow these funds through to the designated recipient programs as part of its annual grant allocation process. The LFW may not charge administrative expenses against these funds, and they must be flowed through in their entirety. All such funds are governed by the provisions of RCW 2.53.030. Under the contracting and subcontracting arrangements, NJP is ultimately responsible for the proper use of these funds by the subrecipients, and the OCLA has expressly reserved its full authority to ensure that funds are used for authorized purposes. The OCLA is a party to the NJP-Legal Foundation of Washington subcontract.

B. Washington State Grange

In 2004 the civil legal aid community, led by the Access to Justice Board's Equal Justice Coalition, asked the Legislature for a supplemental funding increase of \$2.0 million. Following on the heels of Civil Legal Needs Study, this request was deemed necessary to avoid additional cuts in legal aid services, and was supported by the Supreme Court, the BJA, the WSBA and many others. The funding was appropriated with the directive that \$100,000 be provided solely for a "general farm organization with members in every county of the state to develop and administer and alternative dispute resolution system for disputes between farmers and farmworkers."

An historical digression is required to put this line item appropriation in context. The 2004 Legislature's decision to earmark a portion of the legal aid appropriation for matters relating to the resolution of disputes between farmworkers and agricultural employers was the most recent example of special legislation designed to address longstanding tensions between providers of civil legal aid services to farmworkers and the agricultural industry. Even though no state funding may be used to represent low income farmworkers on matters relating to their employment, legal aid representation of farmworkers on employment related matters has been the subject of two previous pieces of special legislative focus. Responding to substantial pressure by agricultural interests to eliminate state funding for civil legal aid services, the 1995 Legislature attached a budget proviso which, among other things, established a special task force on agricultural interest/legal aid relations, defined with particularity the rules, rights and expectations regarding the manner in which farmworker outreach activities of legal aid service providers were to be conducted, and imposed special and unique rules on pre-litigation communications in matters where state funded legal aid programs represented farmworkers against agricultural employers. In 1996, the Legislature provided a supplemental appropriation of \$1 million for civil legal aid services to help mitigate the consequences of a more than \$2 million loss of federal funding. This \$1 million was conditioned upon the negotiation and execution of an alternative dispute resolution system between the Washington Growers League, Columbia Legal Services and the Northwest Justice Project. After many months of facilitated negotiations, the parties were unable to reach an agreement that respected the ethical responsibilities that the legal aid programs owed to their clients, and the supplemental appropriation lapsed.

Returning to the 2004 appropriation, the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (which formerly managed the state legal aid contract) engaged in a competitive bidding process. After evaluating proposals from two farm organizations that met the legislative criteria (the Washington State Grange and the Washington Farm Bureau), it entered into a contract with the Washington State Grange to develop and administer the ADR system contemplated by the Legislature. The Washington State Grange established an Alternative Dispute Resolution System (ADRS) which would be overseen by an ADRS Oversight Board consisting of representatives of the Grange, the Yakima-based Washington Growers' League, the Wenatchee-based Washington Growers Clearinghouse, Northwest Justice Project, Columbia Legal Services and the United Farmworkers of America. The ADRS was envisioned as a voluntary, culturally competent, system for the identification, referral and mediation of farm employment disputes. A bi-lingual staff person was hired, mediators identified and trained, and

outreach was conducted to both agricultural employer and employee communities. By the end of the FY 2004-05 biennium, the program was on its feet and ready to move forward.

At the request of the Grange and others involved with the program, the FY 2006-07 biennial budget continued funding for this program. Administration was transferred to the Office of Civil Legal Aid. While the language used in this budget was identical to that incorporated into the FY 2005 supplemental budget, review of the relevant history indicated that the Legislature intended that the funds be used to continue implementing the program developed under the contract between DCTED and the Washington State Grange. Consequently, in July the Office of Civil Legal Aid entered into a three month interim contract with the Washington State Grange to ensure continued operation of the program pending negotiation of a final contract and new operating plan. (Washington State Grange Contract – Attachment 12). A final contract should be entered into within the next week. This contract will not only allow for continued operations, but will reserve funding necessary to contract for an independent assessment of the utility and efficacy of this program.

III. Activities Related to the Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee

In addition to creating the Office of Civil Legal Aid, HB 1747 established the Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee. This Oversight Committee replaced the Joint Legislative Civil Legal Services Oversight Committee that had been established in 1996 (previously codified at RCW 43.08.270), which had not met since FY 2000.

The statute provided for an eleven-member committee consisting of five (5) judicial branch appointees, four (4) legislative appointees, one appointee from the Governor's office and one appointee from the Washington State Bar Association. The appointment process proceeded throughout the summer, and the final appointment was made by the Supreme Court at its en banc administrative meeting the first week of October.

From August to the present the Director of the Office of Civil Legal Aid met with every member of the Oversight Committee. The purpose of these meetings was to (a) introduce the Director and meet the committee member, (b) introduce the Office of Civil Legal Aid, (c) share thoughts about both the Office of Civil Legal Aid and the Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee, and (d) gain insight and ideas from committee members on the initial course of the committee's work. Materials developed and shared during these meetings were designed to help Oversight Committee members gain a rudimentary understanding of the organizations involved in the establishment of policy, oversight, funding and delivery of civil legal aid services in the state (some of which have been reproduced and included with this report). From these meetings it is clear that every Oversight Committee member is energetic and committed to establishing the Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee and the Office of Civil Legal Aid as responsible, mission-driven, credible entities.

In anticipation of this meeting some committee members were asked to serve on two ad-hoc working groups: (1) a working group to make preliminary recommendations relating to the structure, governance and initial operations of the Oversight Committee, and (2) a working group to help develop an agenda for this organizational meeting.

The working group on structure and governance issues included representatives from the three appointing branches: Judge Mark Huth (judicial), Senator Stephen Johnson (legislative) and Judge Paul Bastine (executive). The working group has developed a memo and a draft set of operating rules and procedures for the Oversight Committee's consideration. (Memo from Structure and Governance Working Group (9/27/05) and draft Operating Rules and Procedures – Attachment 13). These will be the subject of discussion and action at the October 12th meeting.

The Draft Agenda was prepared with the assistance of Judges Allan, Hinojos-Fall and Bastine.

IV. Judicial Branch Agency Relations

The Office of Civil Legal Aid and the Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee are the newest members of the judicial branch family of agencies and entities. An initial area of focus has been to orient the OCLA to these organizations and help the leaders and staff of these organizations gain understanding of where and how OCLA and the Oversight Committee fit in.

The legislation creating the Office of Civil Legal Aid and the Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee was modeled after similar legislation that created the Office of Public Defense (OPD). OPD was initially established in 1996 as an independent judicial branch agency to contract, administer and oversee state appropriated funding for capital defense cases. The agency's charge has substantially broadened in recent years. Because of the parallels between the two offices and in light of the extraordinary respect that the OPD has cultivated over the past nine years, the OCLA Director has sought out the counsel and guidance of the Director of the Office of Public Defense, Joanne Moore, on issues that have arisen within the OCLA with respect to which, given the parallel structures of our two offices, she may have had experience.

In addition to AOC and OPD, meetings have been held with the Chief Justice and every member of the Supreme Court. These meetings have provided insight into the expectations that members of the Court have as it relates to the role that the OCLA can and should play. Chief Justice Alexander has been very supportive from the outset, has promoted the Office of Civil Legal Aid within the judicial branch, and has affirmatively sought advice on matters that touch or concern the OCLA, entities that it funds and other ATJ-related matters.

As part of the judicial branch credentialing process, the Office of Civil Legal Aid made a presentation at the business meeting at the recently concluded Judicial Conference in Tacoma. An introductory presentation will be made at the BJA's meeting later this month. The Director will work closely with the BJA's Executive Director, Jeff Hall, and the Court Funding Task Force's Implementation Strategies Committee as the Justice in Jeopardy initiative moves into its next phase.

The Office of Civil Legal Aid participated in a meeting called by Dick Manning, chair of the ATJ Board's Equal Justice Coalition, to discuss the institutional roles and relationships between this office and the EJC which, since 1995, has served as the principal ATJ organization to educate and advocate for federal and state legal aid funding.

Meetings have been held with Jan Michels, Executive Director of the Washington State Bar Association and Gail Stone, the WSBA's Legislative Director (whose efforts played a key role in

securing passage of HB 1747 and other parts of the Justice in Jeopardy package this past session). A presentation will soon be made to the WSBA Board of Governors to introduce them to the Office of Civil Legal Aid and the Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee. Brief conversations have been had with staff and members of the Gender and Justice and Minority and Justice Commissions. Efforts will be made to follow up with more direct discussions regarding areas of potential overlap and collaboration.

V. Access to Justice Board-Related Activities and Initiatives

The Supreme Court's Access to Justice Board is the principal civil legal aid delivery planning and policy making body. The ATJ Board has established a vision and set of values that govern the development of civil legal aid delivery and support system planning in this state. (Hallmarks of an Effective Statewide Civil Legal Aid Delivery System – Attachment 14). The ATJ Board creates specific delivery and support system expectations through its State Plan for the Delivery of Civil Legal Aid Services to Low Income People in Washington State. (State Plan (rev. 1999 - Attachment 15). The State Plan is currently being reviewed and revised.

HB 1747 made clear the Legislature's intent that the Office of Civil Legal Aid and the Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee not operate in a vacuum and that the OCLA and the Oversight Committee are, to the extent consistent with the statute, to work closely with the ATJ Board on matters relating to policy, service delivery system design and oversight. Thus, even though the Access to Justice Board was created by Supreme Court order (as opposed to legislation), RCW 2.53.020 directs the ATJ Board to participate in the OCLA Director selection process, the Director is required by that same provision to report quarterly to the Oversight Committee *and* the ATJ Board, and RCW 2.53.010 directs the Oversight Committee to forward any recommendations it may make with respect to provision of state funded civil legal aid services to, among others, the ATJ Board..

In service of these expectations, the Office of Civil Legal Aid has been invited to attend the ATJ Board's regular meetings and report on significant developments. The Director communicates frequently on matters of common interest with the WSBA Justice Programs Manager, Joan Fairbanks, who is principal staff to the ATJ Board. The Office of Civil Legal Aid has been asked to participate on two committees ((a) State Support and (b) Delivery System Structure) as part of the ATJ Board's State Plan Review Process as well as one other special committee looking at the role, positioning and future structure of the ATJ Board itself.

In December 2004 the Supreme Court entered an order adopting a set of Access to Justice Technology Principles designed to insure that justice system organizations and entities involved in the development, implementation or support of technology-based services and systems worked to make those systems broadly accessible to the full spectrum of potential end users, and that the development or implementation of such systems did not operate to unintentionally exclude potential users. (Order Adopting Access to Justice Technology Principles – Attachment 16). As a judicial branch agency, the Office of Civil Legal Aid is responsible for complying with these technology principles. The office has begun its compliance effort by building a duty to comply into its third-party contracts. Further, because these principles are designed to further access to the machinery of justice for those who experience disproportionate barriers to or limits on their ability to access technology based systems (many of whom are low income, disabled, and in

need of civil legal aid services), the successful implementation of these principles is a matter of significant institutional concern to the OCLA. For this reason, the Office of Civil Legal Aid has been invited to serve on the ATJ Technology Principles Implementation Strategy Group.

The Office of Civil Legal Aid has also been working with the ATJ Board, the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy (an office within the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development), the Legal Foundation of Washington, representatives of the domestic violence victim advocacy community, the Northwest Justice Project and others to help address issues arising from the unanticipated loss of about \$500,000 in annual funding to support civil legal aid and volunteer attorney services to low income victims of domestic violence in Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, King and Grant counties. This loss of funding threatens longstanding delivery partnerships and has raised the need for the ATJ community to develop a more consistent approach to the delivery of civil legal aid services to victims of domestic violence on a statewide basis. (Letter to Christine Crowell from Bev Emery (OCVA) and Jim Bamberger (OCLA) – Attachment 17). Work in this area is ongoing.

In 1999 the ATJ Board adopted an initial set of program performance accountability standards. Consistent with OCLA's oversight responsibilities, the Director has had preliminary discussions with staff at the Legal Foundation of Washington and the ATJ Board about the value of reviewing, updating and revising these standards to better help the Foundation and OCLA establish and adhere to common standards for performance accountability consistent (in the case of the OCLA) with the statutory mandate (outlined in RCW 2.53.030) and the ATJ Board's Hallmarks and State Plan. On a related matter, the OCLA has begun working with ATJ Board and Legal Foundation of Washington staff to define the characteristics of, and a system to acquire, a unified case management system that will allow, among other things, the OCLA to obtain relevant information to perform its dual functions of (a) ensuring accountability for the use of state funding consistent with statutory and contractual terms and conditions; and (b) contemporaneously monitoring demand and delivery related statistical information that will allow us to monitor the effectiveness of contracted client services, identify service delivery gaps, evaluate progress against the findings of the Civil Legal Needs Study and make appropriate policy recommendations to the ATJ Board and Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee.

VI. Other Activities

While passage of HB 1747 resulted in the move of administration and oversight for civil legal aid funding from the executive to the judicial branch, it continues to be important that there be regular and effective communication between the Office of Civil Legal Aid and key executive branch leaders. To this end, introductory meetings have been held with the Director of the Office of Financial Management's Policy Office, Laurie Dolan, the Assistant Policy Advisor with responsibility for civil legal aid-related issues, John Lane, and with the Governor's General Counsel, Richard Martin. Additional meetings will be scheduled with Attorney General Rob McKenna and key policy advisors in his office to ensure effective coordination between the two offices on matters of common concern.

Finally, in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the Office of Civil Legal Aid worked with OFM Policy Advisor Antonio Ginatta and representatives of the Emergency Services Division, FEMA and leadership staff at the Northwest Justice Project to insure that on-site emergency civil legal

aid services would be made available to survivors who, at one time, were thought would be sent to Fort Lewis. Even though plans changed and we were not faced with the prospect of receiving the 2,000 to 4,000 people initially anticipated, a number of low income survivors have temporarily relocated to Washington State. The Northwest Justice Project has established a special phone line and has provided special training to ensure that those who do come to our state receive timely and effective emergency civil legal assistance. The OCLA will continue to work with the appropriate authorities to ensure that civil legal aid services are included as a core component of emergency relief and disaster response preparations. (Letters to Jim Mullen (EMD) and John Pennington (FEMA) – Attachment 18).

VII. Conclusion

It has been a quick three months, and the learning curve has been steep. Every day brings new challenges. I'm honored to have been asked to lead this new agency, and I look forward to working with you, the members of the Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee, to firmly establish this agency as a credible, permanent fixture within the judicial branch.